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Reel Reading

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### Lit Log #1

Alfred Hitchcock is one of the most critically acclaimed directors of all-time. His choices are ones that very few other directors would make at the time. The way that he is able to execute all of his decisions and make them work perfectly for his films is incredible. One of Hitchcock's unique directorial choices includes him making a small appearance in his movies. When it comes to the technical aspects of his films, the shots that are used are perfectly placed and present such an amazing visual appearance. There are many very memorable close-up shots throughout Hitchcock's films. Ultimately when it comes to theatrical film elements, Alfred Hitchcock is most known for the suspense that occurs in his films. Hitchcock has gained the nickname "*The Master of Suspense*" due to the outstanding use of suspense in his movies. Two of Hitchcock's most well known films are, *Psycho* (1960) and *Rear Window* (1954). In both of these films, there are great examples of close up shots, the use of suspense, and of course Hitchcock's special little appearance in the movie.

The movie *Psycho* is about a young woman who steals \$400,000 in cash and then goes to her boyfriend. On the way to go see him, she stops at The Bates Motel for the night where she is murdered. Her sister and boyfriend then go on a hunt to find out what happened to her and who killed her. Within the first 10 minutes of the film, the audience has their "Where's Hitchcock" moment when he is spotted wearing a cowboy hat through the window of a bank. *Psycho* has many memorable close up shots. The two most famous close ups are when Marion was killed

and the shot of Norman Bates at the police station at the end. First, Marion is in the shower when the shower curtain is quickly opened and she is stabbed. The shot is of Marion right when the shower curtain is opened and she screams.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, at the end of the movie when Norman Bates is in the police station and gets a blanket. In the shot, he is sitting there staring with his mother's mind in control.<sup>2</sup> The use of the close up shot in these situations really brings out the emotions of the characters and reels the audience into the mind of the character. While both of those are very impressive, the way that Hitchcock uses suspense in the movie remains superior. The suspense of the film immediately starts when Marion takes the \$400,000 and drives away. Alfred Hitchcock is able to keep the audience engaged with that small little storyline while leading up to the major plot. In all of his films, Hitchcock always gives the audience something to think about or question.

The movie *Rear Window* is about a man named L.B. Jeffries who is injured with a cast and in a wheelchair. There is not much to do but sit and look out the window into the courtyard and other people's windows. While looking at all the peoples lives, Jeffries slowly solves a murder. This Hitchcock film is a lot slower then *Psycho* but all of a sudden speeds up and gives the viewers a lot to think about. Hitchcock makes his quick appearance about 30 minutes into the film when he is fixing a clock in one of the neighbors houses. While Hitchcock has many great close up shots, in *Rear Window* there are a lot less than most of his films because the movie is from one character's point of view looking out of a window. However, there are times where we are able to see Jeff close up. This shot is Jeff looking through his camera at the people in the courtyard while putting the pieces together to solve the murder.<sup>3</sup> With this shot, the audience is able to see the concern in Jeffries face. While in *Psycho* there is almost immediate suspense,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://images.app.goo.gl/7KRyuBPs4QpyM8Rt8>

<sup>2</sup> <https://images.app.goo.gl/6KRZ1UPNuPKBCYHc6>

<sup>3</sup> <https://images.app.goo.gl/egGCLDvmEqSRZ7WW6>

*Rear Window* makes the audience think a lot before getting suspenseful. There are many decoys within the film which keeps the audience on their toes. The murder is focused on one apartment in the courtyard while there are about 6 other people living in different apartments that have nothing to do with the murder. This is genius from Hitchcock because the audience knows something occurred but does not know who is involved out of all the options. It is a way to keep the audience engaged and a way to add suspense. It is also amazing that the audience knows just as much as the main character because the whole film is from his point of view and you rarely leave his window.

Alfred Hitchcock's decisions when it comes to the types of shots, the suspense and his special little appearances are just a few reasons why he was such a timeless and well known director. The Master of Suspense has directed some of the greatest films of all time and the films along with him will live on forever.